



**Testimony of Robert Englander, MD, MPH, Senior Vice President,  
Quality and Patient Safety and Director of the Division on Hospital Medicine,  
Connecticut Children's Medical Center  
To the Appropriations Committee  
Regarding the Department of Social Services budget for Fiscal Years 2010-2011  
February 11, 2010**

Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian, members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I am Dr. Robert Englander, Senior Vice President for Quality and Patient Safety and Director of the Division on Hospital Medicine at Connecticut Children's Medical Center. As a member of the Connecticut Children's Medical Center Executive Management Team, I am here today representing the pediatric physicians who strive each day to provide the best possible health care services to the children of our region.

At Connecticut Children's, nothing is more important than a child's health. That's why all of the healthcare professionals at Connecticut Children's chose to become part of the only hospital in the region dedicated exclusively to children. It is commonly accepted that centers dedicated to children provide better and more efficient care than adult or mixed environments. Since we care for children exclusively, we would respectfully suggest that no one else in Connecticut has a better understanding of a child's needs and the care options available for them and their families.

We offer the full spectrum of pediatric care to children from each of Connecticut's 169 cities and towns. In Fiscal Year 2009, Connecticut Children's pediatric health care professionals collaborated to care for over 250,000 patients. 35,000 children received pediatric primary care services, 51,000 children visited our emergency department and we performed over 9,800 surgeries.

Advances in pediatric medicine have allowed us to move many treatments that used to require an inpatient admission to the outpatient setting. As a result, the average child who does require hospitalization has more complex needs. Connecticut Children's formed one of the first academic divisions of hospital medicine in the country. I am proud to be the Director of this distinguished group of hospitalists. Hospitalists are doctors who care only for children who require general inpatient care and children with complex medical conditions requiring coordination of care from multiple specialists. Because we only work in the inpatient setting, we have unique skills and knowledge that allow us to optimize care based on the current best evidence in a most efficient manner.

Connecticut Children's is a vital resource for children and families across the state. We have had significant successes in providing the highest quality care to children as

measured against national benchmarks. Examples of our success include our Neonatal Intensive Care Unit which measures in the top quartile or decile for most major clinical indicators compared to our national counterparts; our Cystic Fibrosis center which has been in the top ten performers out of approximately 140 centers on the two most important clinical indicators-nutrition and lung function; and our readmission rates for asthma which are among the lowest compared to other children's hospitals.

I have been moved by the many profound stories of families in need throughout my 23 year career in pediatrics, but never on the scale of the past 18 months. Our hospitalist group is now responsible for overseeing nearly 2000 admissions per year. Many of the families of those patients are struggling just to survive. The added burden of a hospitalized child in the context of these struggles is unimaginable for most of us. Having the resource of Connecticut Children's serves as a comfort to so many of them, and I am always moved by their gratitude. The array of subspecialists and health care personnel devoted solely to the care of children allows these families to stay "in their own backyards" and receive the care they deserve.

All children should have the health care they need to grow and lead healthy productive lives. It is critically important for the State to recognize and provide coverage for those uninsured children who are often at highest risk. Inadequate coverage cannot help these children making it impossible for providers to be able to afford to treat them. The State must pay safety net providers like Connecticut Children's adequately in order to ensure access to care.

Thank you.